

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 AGR-20 EB-11 COME-00 AID-20

OMB-01 STR-08 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PA-03

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R 131545Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5544

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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PASS AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, IN

SUBJ: WEEKLY FOODGRAIN SITUATION

REF: NEW DELHI 7908

BEGIN SUMMARY: WIDESPREAD RAINS OCCURRED DURING THE PAST WEEK OVER MOST PARTS OF INDIA EXCLUDING DELHI, PUNJAB, HARYANA, UTTAR PRADESH AND BIHAR. RAINS SINCE JULY 2 HAVE OVERCOME THE EARLIER RAINFALL DEFICITS IN MOST AREAS AND HAVE GENERALLY IMPROVED PROSPECTS FOR THIS YEAR'S FALL-HARVESTED CROPS. THESE RAINS HAVE ALSO SOLVED THE DRINKING WATER PROBLEM IN MOST OF THE DROUGHT-STRICKEN AREAS. THERE WAS ONE INCIDENT OF ATTEMPTED SEIZURE OF RICE STOCKS BY CIVILIANS IN WEST BENGAL WHICH RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF FOUR PERSONS. IN KERALA STATE THE GOVERNMENT ORDERED THE CLOSURE OF ALL SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD APPREHENDING STUDENTS' PROMOTION OF DISTURBANCES DUE TO THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DIFFICULT FOOD SUPPLY/PRICE SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT DURING THE PAST WEEK CONCERNING INDIA'S FOODGRAIN SITUATION WAS CONTINUATION OF MONSOON RAINS WHICH REAPPEARED JULY 2. THERE WAS MODERATE TO HEAVY RAINS OVER MOST PARTS OF INDIA EXCLUDING THE NORTHERN STATES OF PUNJAB, HARYANA, UTTAR PRADESH, BIHAR AND THE DELHI AREA. OF THE 35 WEATHER ZONES IN INDIA, 21 ZONES RECEIVED NORMAL OR ABOVE NORMAL RAINFALL DURING THE WEEK ENDING JULY 11. ALMOST ALL DROUGHT AREAS IN MAHARASHTRA, GUJARAT, MYSORE AND MADHYA PRADESH RECEIVED GOOD RAINS WHICH ALSO SOLVED THE DRINKING WATER PROBLEM IN THESE AREAS. WIDESPREAD RAINS SINCE JULY 1 HAVE OVERCOME RAINFALL DEFICIT IN MOST PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

2. OUR CONGEN IN BOMBAY REPORTS THAT WITH THE RESUMPTION OF MONSOON RAINS, SOWING OPERATIONS HAVE BEEN IN FULL SWING IN MAHARASHTRA, GUJARAT AND MADHYA PRADESH WITH SOME AREAS REPORTING SOWINGS NEAR COMPLETION. TO ENCOURAGE THE MOVEMENT OF FARM WORKERS FROM RELIEF PROJECTS BACK TO THE FARMS, THE GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA HAS ANNOUNCED THAT DAILY WAGES AT RELIEF PROJECTS WILL BE REDUCED FROM RS 3.00 TO RS 2.50 EFFECTIVE JULY 15. ALSO, FROM THE SAME DATE, NOT MORE THAN TWO MEMBERS OF A FAMILY WILL BE EMPLOYED ON RELIEF WORK PROJECTS. IN MOST AREAS OF INDIA, EXCLUDING UTTAR PRADESH, CUTS OF HYDROELECTRIC POWER HAVE BEEN PARTIALLY OR FULLY RESTORED DUE TO INCREASES IN THE WATER LEVEL OF RESERVOIRS.

3. THE NEWS MEDIA HAVE BEEN UNUSUALLY QUIET DURING THE PAST WEEK CONCERNING SUCH QUESTIONS AS FOODGRAIN PRODUCTION, PROCUREMENT AND IMPORTS. TOP GOI OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO SAY THAT FOODGRAIN IMPORTS ARE BEING ARRANGED FROM THE USA, ARGENTINA AND CANADA, BUT IN RECENT DAYS THEY HAVE NOT MENTIONED QUANTITIES OR THE PLANNED ARRIVAL SCHEDULE OF FOODGRAIN IMPORTS. THERE IS STILL CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPORTED FOODGRAINS NOT ARRIVING IN TIME TO FILL THE GAP IN DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO THE FALL HARVEST.

4. IN THE PAST WEEK THERE WAS ONE ALTERCATION BETWEEN CIVILIANS AND POLICE OVER RICE SUPPLIES IN WEST BENGAL. CIVILIANS ATTEMPTED TO SEIZE RICE BEING OFFLOADED AT A RAILWAY STATION NEAR CALCUTTA. POLICE INTERVENED WHICH RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF ONE CIVILIAN AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF FOUR CIVILIANS. IN KERALA OPPOSITION MEMBERS WALKED OUT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY WHEN THE STATE GOVERNMENT REFUSED TO GUARANTEE A FOODGRAIN RATION OF 12 OZ PER DAY. STATE OFFICIALS POINTED OUT THAT THEY DEPEND UPON THE CENTER FOR FOODGRAIN SUPPLIES AND CAN NOT MAKE GUARANTEES. IN ANTICIPATION OF DISTURBANCES THAT MAY BE ORGANIZED BY COLLEGE STUDENTS, THE KERALA GOVERNMENT HAS ORDERED ALL SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES IN THE STATE TO CLOSE AND TO REMAIN CLOSED FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD UNTIL THERE IS AN

IMPROVEMENT IN FOOD SUPPLY/PRICE SITUATION.

5. TOPICS UNDER ACTIVE DISCUSSION AMONG GOI OFFICIALS ARE GOVERNMENT TAKE-OVER OF WHOLESALE TRADE IN RICE, POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING THE PROCUREMENT PRICE PAID TO FARMERS FOR FOODGRAINS AND AT THE SAME TIME INCREASING THE RETAIL PRICE OF FOODGRAINS ISSUED THROUGH FAIR PRICE SHOPS.

6 COMMENTS: THE APPREHENSIONS THAT HAD BEEN EXPRESSED CONCERNING PROSPECTS FOR FALL HARVESTED CROPS HAVE DIMINISHED WITH THE GENERAL RESUMPTION OF MONSOON RAINS SINCE JULY 2. IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED, HOWEVER, THAT INDIA IS ONLY 6 WEEKS INTO THE MONSOON SEASON. PERFORMANCE OF THE MONSOON DURING THE REMAINING 11 WEEKS WILL HAVE A MAJOR EFFECT ON THE OUTCOME OF FALL HARVESTED CROPS.  
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